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HUNTINGTON MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON ON ILLEGAL GUN POSSESSION CHARGE

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. – William Raeshaun Byrd, 21, of Huntington, was sentenced today to 33 months in prison by United States District Judge Robert C. Chambers for being a felon in possession of a firearm. Byrd pleaded guilty in February to the charge. On December 23, 2009, an officer with the Huntington Police Department responded to a report of gunshots in the vicinity of Charleston Avenue in Huntington. Police observed the defendant in the area and asked him to stop. As the officer approached, the defendant fled and led police on a foot chase to a convenience store located on Hal Greer Boulevard in Huntington. Byrd admitted to tossing a pistol in the direction of a group of people that were at the convenience store at the time. Police subsequently apprehended the defendant and seized the pistol. Byrd was convicted of wanton endangerment on May 11, 2009, in the Circuit Court of Cabell County, West Virginia and had not had his civil rights to possess a firearm restored.

This case is being brought as part of the Drug Market Intervention (DMI) initiative. The Drug Market Intervention initiative was established in October of 2010 through a partnership between the Office of U.S. Attorney Booth Goodwin, the Huntington Police Department, along with support from the Fairfield West Improvement Council, the Fairfield Crime and Safety Committee and several state and local agencies. The initiative is primarily aimed at closing down open-air drug markets that breed crimes of violence and disorder.

A joint investigation was conducted by members of the Huntington Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Assistant United States Attorney Joshua Hanks handled the prosecution.

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